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## Human Sciences (BA) (three-year course) Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026

### Entry requirements

Visit [Admission requirements for 2026 entry](#) to view a summary table of each undergraduate course's entry requirements.

If English is not your first language you may also need to meet our [English language requirements](#).

### About the course

Human Sciences is an interdisciplinary degree course which enables students to study humans from multiple interconnecting perspectives across the biological and social sciences.

The degree allows students to make connections between biological, social and cultural phenomena. Such connections are essential for addressing the major issues we face in a rapidly changing world. The programme offers an exciting and challenging alternative to more traditional undergraduate courses.

The BA in Human Sciences was founded in 1969 by specialists across a range of departments at the University. They recognised the need for an interdisciplinary understanding of fundamental issues and problems confronting human societies. This need is as critical now as it was then, as is reflected in the global intensification of interdisciplinary research across traditional subject boundaries in the decades since the degree began.

Central topics include:

- the evolution of humans and their behaviour
- molecular and population genetics
- population growth and ageing
- ethnic and cultural diversity
- and human interaction with the environment, including conservation, disease, and nutrition.

Within a framework of human diversity and sustainability, Human Scientists study the connections between human biology, evolution, genetics, development, psychology, behaviour, ecology, demography, society and culture. This helps them to develop professional competences suited to addressing multidimensional human problems.

The course is taught by specialists from across the University. Lectures introduce the material and provide the core concepts and theories for each paper. Tutorials allow students to consider particular topics in greater depth and draw connections across different perspectives and parts of the degree. They also allow students from different academic backgrounds to gain the necessary grounding across a range of competencies.

Option courses and dissertation preparation in the final year enable students to deepen their interdisciplinary training and expertise in particular topics of interest.

## A typical week

During Years 1 and 2 your work will be divided between lectures (about ten a week) and tutorials (one or two a week with more in the first year). In addition, some practical experience in genetics, physiology, demography or statistics will be offered in certain terms. Computers are used in the teaching of quantitative methods.

In the third year the tutorial and class requirement is reduced to allow more time for option papers and research for your dissertation.

Tutorials are usually 2-4 students and a tutor. Class sizes may vary depending on the options you choose. There would usually be no more than around 20 students although the more popular classes may include up to 30 students.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by staff who are tutors in their subject. Many are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students who are usually studying at doctoral level.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Significant self-study is expected of all students – for further details see [workload and independent study](#) information. Undergraduate courses at Oxford are full-time during term time. Students typically spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work.

## Course structure

### YEAR 1

#### COURSES

Five compulsory courses are taken:

- Ecology and evolution
- Physiology and genetics
- Society, culture and environment
- Sociology and demography
- Quantitative methods for the human sciences

#### ASSESSMENT

First University examinations: five written papers; satisfactory practical record

### YEAR 2

#### COURSES

Five courses are taken:

- Behaviour and its evolution
- Human genetics and evolution
- Human ecology

#### ASSESSMENT

The Human Ecology course is assessed by an extended essay written in the final term of the second year and a

## YEAR 2

- Demography and population
- Either Anthropological analysis and interpretation or Sociological theory

presentation given in the first term of Year 3.

## YEAR 3

### COURSES

- Dissertation to be completed by the beginning of the final term
- Option courses (two chosen) from a list which may vary slightly depending on teaching availability: Anthropology of a selected region (for example Japan, Lowland South America or the Middle East); The anthropology of Buddhism; Biological conservation; Gender theories and realities: cross-cultural perspectives; Geographies of migration, Health and disease; Physical and forensic anthropology: an introduction to human skeletal remains; Quantitative methods; Social policy; plus a range of psychology options.

(Not all options may be available every year – these are subject to change, as explained in the [Terms & Conditions](#) and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.)

### ASSESSMENT

Final University examinations: currently six written papers and a dissertation; extended essay and presentation (see under Year 2)

The options listed above are illustrative and may change. More information about current options is available on the [Human Sciences website](#).

Most Oxford courses are assessed by examinations. These are typically at the end of the first and last years but you may have assessments at other times and some courses have exams in the second year also. First year examinations are often called Prelims or Moderations, and you need to pass these exams to progress to the second year. You must pass your final year exams, or 'finals', to pass your degree. For more information on assessment for your course, please see the Course Structure.

Finals also determine the classification of your degree. For some courses you may also be assessed on your practical work, or you may be required to submit a dissertation. Please check the assessment details for your course.

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make

changes in course provision, either before or after registration. For further information, please see the University's [Terms and Conditions](#) and information about [potential course changes](#).

You are also referred to the [Student Handbook](#) (which is updated every September).

### Fees

These annual fees in 2026/27 are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2026. Information about how much fees and other costs usually increase each year is set out in the [University's Terms and Conditions](#).

For details of annual increases, please see our [guidance on likely increases to fees and charges](#).

Fee status	Annual Course fees in 2026/27
Home	£9,790
Overseas	£43,600

In the 2027-28 academic year course fees for Home fee status students will rise to £10,050 (in line with the government fee cap.).

[Further details about fee status eligibility](#) can be found on the fee status webpage.

### Living costs

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2026 are estimated to be between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month you are in Oxford. Students at Oxford can benefit from our [world class resources](#) and [college provision](#), which may help to keep costs down. Entitlement to certain types of support may depend on your personal financial circumstances.

Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs. For further details please visit our [living costs webpage](#).

### Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545	£2,835	£4,905
Accommodation (including utilities)	£825	£990	£7,425	£8,910
Personal items	£160	£310	£1,440	£2,790
Social activities	£50	£130	£450	£1,170
Study costs	£35	£90	£315	£810
Other	£20	£40	£180	£360
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,405</b>	<b>£2,105</b>	<b>£12,645</b>	<b>£18,945</b>

In order to provide these estimated likely living costs (which are rounded to the nearest £5), the University in collaboration with the Oxford SU conducted a living costs survey in May 2025 to

complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources, including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS).

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. When planning your finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2026-27, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

#### [Additional Fees and Charges Information for Human Sciences](#)

There are no compulsory costs for this course beyond the fees shown above and your living costs.

Regulation - The University of Oxford is regulated by the [Office for Students](#) and subscribes to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) student complaints scheme.